CONSIDERATIONS

ON

SEVERAL PROPOSALS,

LATELY MADE,

FOR THE

Better Maintenance of the Poor.

LONDON,

Printed in the Year MDCCLI.

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PREFACE.

IT has been an obſervation, that, when things come to the worſt, they will mend. The great complaint, made by Some, of the expence in maintaining the Poor, and of the miſmanagement of the money when raiſed for that purpoſe, begins to open the eyes of the moſt indolent: the Poor being in many places ſtill badly provided for, and the Public deprived of the ineſtimable value of their Labour.

A greater degree of true public ſpirit ſeems to be very happily riſing among us, and more attention to be paid than formerly to matters upon which the real welfare of the nation depends. The abſurd jealouſies between the landed and trading intereſts ſeem to ſubſide. The manifeſt truth, *That thoſe intereſts are always the ſame*, grows more apparent; and landed Gentlemen, who conſider how much their eſtates are advanced in value by a thriving commerce, and that nothing elſe can relieve them from the heavy weight of all other taxes, as well as the burden of the Poor, it is to be hoped will now turn their thoughts towards a right employment of theſe uſeful hands.

If Gentlemen would be prevailed upon to give a little of their time to theſe matters, which might really be made an amuſement, the benefit would be unſpeakable: and 'tis certainly not only their proper *province*, but their *duty* ſo to do.

A landed eſtate in a free country is the nobleſt poſſeſſion that mankind can be bleſt with. And is there no return to be made, no reciprocal obligation to be complied with, for it? Will not an account be required of the uſe of this valuable talent? 'Tis high time to remove the Dutch reproach, that a Gentleman and an Idleman are ſynonymous terms.

Not only the making of laws, but the good government of the People fall naturally to the ſhare of the Nobility and Gentry, and it would be for their intereſt as much as for their honour heartily to engage in it.

The neglect of this duty has been the great cauſe of the evil complained of, tho' it has been wrongfully aſcribed to a defect in the laws. For if the whole care of the poor be put upon perſons who have neither time, capacity, authority, nor (as to many of them) ſufficient integrity for the purpoſe, you may make what laws you will, they will never anſwer the end.

But muſt Gentlemen then be Overſeers of the poor, and Pariſh-officers? No, but they muſt intereſt themſelves in the appointing proper officers; in the inſpecting their behaviour and their accounts; in enjoining and enabling them to ſet up workhouſes, or elſe the poor will never be rightly employed,

ployed, or well provided for. If men of rank and fortune will not be perſuaded to give themſelves a little trouble of this ſort, in a bare inſpection of their own pariſhes and near neighbourhood, how can it be expected that there will be a more induſtrious application to the buſineſs of a whole county, if the pariſh-laws ſhould be abrogated?

Let it not be ſurmiſed, that the way in which Gentlemen ſpend their time is reflected on; or rural ſports even tacitly ridiculed. Far from it. Leiſure is one of the high bleſſings that an eſtate brings with it; and rural ſports are manly and uſeful amuſements, contributing to health, to vigour, and good ſpirits. All that is aſked here is, that ſome ſmall part of this leiſure, health, and ſpirits, may be laid out in the public ſervice, for the benefit at the ſame time of their own families and eſtates. What joy, what worthy ſatisfaction muſt ariſe in the heart of any man, who can think at all, when he reflects, that, by giving an hour or two in a week to public buſineſs, he has been the means of procuring greater happineſs to ſcores of people than the giving them half his rents would have done; that he has enabled them to bring hither the wealth of Peru, and that he has prevented them from being a peſt to ſociety?

Notwithſtanding the general corruption of human nature, ſo much and ſometimes ſo juſtly complained of; notwithſtanding the depravation of morals which riches and luxury do and ever will produce; it muſt be owned beyond all power of con-

tradiction, that there ſtill remains in the people of Britain of all ranks (and more eſpecially among the great and opulent) ſuch a ſpirit of benevolence and charity as cannot eaſily be deſcribed, or ſufficiently commended. It may therefore be preſumed, that mere *indolence* among the men of fortune is not the chief cauſe that counteracts their natural humanity, and prevents their engaging in the good work propoſed. May it not rather be aſcribed to their thinking it would be to no purpoſe for them to act; and that it is out of their power to do any good under the preſent laws, which are ſaid to be not only ill executed, but wrong in their foundation, and not capable of being put into ſerviceable practice?

The buſineſs of the following papers is to ſhew, that theſe laws are fundamentally good; and, with ſuch ſmall improvements and alterations as the change of times and circumſtances make neceſſary, will effectually anſwer the excellent purpoſes deſigned: provided that perſons of rank and ſubſtance will give ſome countenance and authority towards their ſupport.

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CONSIDERATIONS

ON

SEVERAL PROPOSALS, &c.

THO' the generality of perſons, who have found fault with the ſtatute of the 43d of Q. Elizabeth *for maintaining and employing the poor*, have in the main acknowledged the Principles of it to be good; and tho' their objections have gone chiefly to the defects in the execution; yet ſtill they have, in the warmth of their concern, inſenſibly attacked the very Principles they ſeemed to approve. Let it therefore be firſt of all ſettled, Whether the plan of that Law be right or not. If it be right, then let it be inqured, Whether the Defects in the Execution may not be removed, and in what manner? If it be wrong, the new propoſals ought to take place, unleſs ſomething better ſhould be offered.

Some few writers have been ſo much offended at the laws in being, that they have expreſſed a deſire to have them *all aboliſhed*, and the poor left to *random charity*; as they are in moſt places abroad, and in two of our own three Kingdoms.

A general Averſion to ſuch ill policy, if not actual cruelty, makes it needleſs to give much anſwer to this violent meaſure; and therefore it is recommended to thoſe who in any degree eſpouſe it, that they would conſider, How much the ſyſtem of a ſufficient *general* charity is broken by a diſuſe of near 200 years; and that before it would get into any ſort of right train again, thouſands would miſerably periſh, trade ſuffer, and ſuch confuſion ariſe among us, as is not eaſy to be foreſeen. Moſt of our foreign neighbours have the lands of the Church

(which bear a great proportion to the eſtates of the whole) appropriated in ſome meaſure to the ſupport of the poor: and yet there, beggary is ſuch a nuſance, as the beggary here would bluſh at.

In Ireland, when a ſevere winter happens, or the price of corn runs high, there is ſuch miſery even to Death itſelf, as would ſhock humanity to think of.

In Scotland we know, to our own coſt, that profeſs'd Rapine and Pillage, and a readineſs to join in every evil and deſperate work, are the habits of an unprovided poor.

To conſider, that all who are good and benevolent would be moſt highly taxed, while all *the baſe, the mean, and the avaritious* would eſcape, and hug themſelves with the exemption; and to conſider, that the charities of the beneficent would be liable to partiality, if not to party: theſe things ſurely are enough to baniſh every thought of aboliſhing our preſent humane and prudent proviſion.

Taking it then for granted, that charity will continue to be eſtabliſhed by law; the great Queſtion will be, Whether the Parochial maintenance eſtabliſhed by Q. Elizabeth is the true way, or whether it may be better effected in the larger diſtricts recommended by Judge Hale, Sir Joſiah Child, the reſolutions of the houſe of Commons in 1735 [a], and the reſolutions in 1751 [b].

Judge Hale propoſed, that the Juſtices in Seſſions ſhould ſet out each County into ſeveral diviſions. Sir Joſiah Child would have had all London and Weſtminſter, the Borough of Southwark, and all the pariſhes within ten miles round, thrown into one corporation.

The Reſolutions in 1735 and 1751 recommend a County-proviſion for the poor.

That the old method is more likely to ſucceed, may appear even from the reaſon of things: Becauſe a great

[a] Theſe were brought in by Mr. Hay, and ſupported in his valuable performance on this Subject, intituled *Remarks on the Laws relating to the Poor.*

[b] Theſe were reported by Sir Richard Lloyd, whoſe worthy pains and conſpicuous abilities ſo handſomely exerted in this and ſome other great points, relating to the good order of the Kingdom, cannot be too gratefully acknowledged.

multitude

multitude is certainly better to be governed, and in every reſpect more eaſily to be provided for, BY BEING DIVIDED INTO MANY SUBORDINATE PARTS, THAN IN GREAT AND UNWIELDY NUMBERS: and conſtant experience in all ages and places perpetually proves this truth.

But then it will be aſked, Why has not this Method ſucceeded? The plain anſwer is, that nothing can ſucceed, however true in its principles, if it be neglected, and not put in practice. The new propoſals can't ſucceed, if there be not vigor in the Execution. And if there be ſuch a vigor exerted, either by a voluntary good Spirit, or by new laws to enforce it, the application of it may as well operate under rational and experienced principles, as under any new projects whatſoever.

Both reaſon and experience incline the legiſlature of a great people, to be careful how they make violent alterations in any conſiderable point that has been long eſtabliſhed, unleſs the neceſſity be urgent, and the conſequences clear.

The preſent plan is rational in itſelf: we have lived under it near two centuries, and we know the Expence of it. But the propoſal of enlarging the diſtricts, is new and unuſual, *not founded in reaſon*, and will be attended with an EXPENCE which the wiſeſt man living cannot foreſee the amount of.

The *expence* alone would not be a ſufficient argument againſt the new propoſals, if there was any probability that they would produce the deſired effect, better than the amendment and enforcing of the ſtatutes now in uſe. A nation that has ventured to contract a debt of *eighty millions* in order to keep up its grandeur and independency, and which never declines expence in ſchemes that ſeem deſerving of it, would not heſitate at the charge of theſe alterations, amazingly great as they will certainly be, if the great object of them neceſſarily required it.

But if this new propoſal be a project not ſupported by mature conſideration; if it be *unneceſſary*, and the great end of it attainable by the preſent laws, will a prudent people already *eighty millions* in debt, (and who find it very proper to be paying that debt, in order to be able to look a dangerous neighbour in the face) will ſuch a

people

people wantonly engage in an expence, the very calculation of which has not yet been attempted to be made?

One of the great complaints at preſent, is, of the charge we are at in maintaining the poor. If this charge be great now, while the pariſhes, (with the *thriſt* that *immediate ſelf-intereſt* dictates,) conduct every thing in a *frugal* manner, without payment of *ſalaries to officers*, and many ſuch like outgoings: how immenſe will be the *profuſion*, when this check ſhall be removed, and a little ARMY OF OFFICERS appointed, for the care of the poor of a whole County carried into one place?

What can be the meaning, that after the repreſentations of Judge Hale, Sir Joſiah Child, and other conſiderable perſons, and the reſolutions of the houſe of Commons in 1735, nothing was done in purſuance of them? It ſeems clearly this, That, when the thing came to be maturely conſidered, the danger of the alteration appeared ſo great, that it was by no means prudent to attempt it. It may likewiſe be ſuppoſed, that thoſe great men, as well as others of late, might be ſo ſtruck with the neglect and ill execution of the preſent laws, (eſpecially in Weſtminſter, and the outparts of London) as to be induced to think, that the fault was in the ſtatutes more than in the execution: whereas, if Gentlemen would deſcend a little into practical experience, they would find to demonſtration, that the defect really lies juſt the contrary way.

A right management of ſuch numbers got together will be quite *impracticable*: the *morals* of the better ſort of poor will be corrupted by the *vagabond and the idle*, who cannot be quite ſeparated from the reſt. The pariſhes cannot ſend ſuch of their poor thither who fall under *accidental* diſtreſſes. The CHARGE and TROUBLE of conveying backwards and forwards, thoſe they do ſend, will be very great. The *accounts* between pariſhes and the great corporation of the County, will be liable to FRAUDS WITHOUT NUMBER, as well as unneceſſary PROFUSION. In ſhort, the *inconveniencies* attending the propoſed alteration will be ſo *grievous*, that the great and worthy men who have offered it, would never have entertained a

thought

thought of ſuch a ſcheme, had it lain in their way to have made the actual care of the poor a little more their attention; but their ſituation has generally removed them from the practical object, and therefore it is that they have been ſo ready to lay the blame in the wrong place.

It has been objected to the wiſe and ſalutary proviſion for the poor in a parochial way, that the lower ſort of people are rendered quite negligent by it. *Hang ſorrow and caſt away care, the pariſh is bound to find us*, is ſuppoſed to be their maxim, as well as their ſong. There is undoubtedly a good deal of truth in this obſervation: but would this *negligent* temper be at all rectified by the propoſed ſcheme? Would not, *the County is bound to find us*, run as well as *the pariſh?* Would the *cauſe* be at all remov'd? The profligate would like the County-proviſion much better than that of the pariſh; but how will it be with the INDUSTRIOUS POOR, of which there are a great number, and who ſeem to be *quite forgot*, and their names never mentioned, nor their intereſts thought of, in any of the new ſchemes? What *deſpondency* will it drive them into, to think, that they will *now no longer have a home?* If many of the lewd and careleſs encourage themſelves in the thought, that the pariſh muſt take care of them; this reflexion is as uſeful on the other hand to *ſupport* the minds of the *induſtrious*, under the afflictions of poverty. It makes *young laborious people venture to marry*, when nothing elſe could, and helps to propagate a race of the moſt uſeful ſubjects we have.

Another great complaint, and a very juſt one, is made againſt the *rambling* of the poor; and which is confeſſedly at this time one of the *greateſt nuſances* belonging to them. But will deſtroying parochial ſettlement and proviſion prevent wandering? Let Gentlemen conſider, whether any thing in nature is ſo likely to cure this evil as to *enforce the preſent laws?*

The truth upon the whole really is, that the *diviſions* are at preſent *too large* and not too ſmall.

What is the reaſon that the poor are better taken care of, and all kinds of complaints relating to them leſs, in the city of London, than in the outpariſhes, and in Weſtminſter?

minſter? The thing is plain; the pariſhes in the city are ſmaller, and there are more officers, and more magiſtrates who do their duty there, than in the other parts.

Could ſuch twopenny lodging-places for ſcores of people under one roof, as Mr. Fielding complains of, [places filled with debauchery and ſtench, and every thing that can reſemble Hell itſelf;] ſubſiſt in the city of London for one week? Impoſſible! but they can't be ſuppreſſed in Mr. Welſh's vaſt Holborn diviſion, notwithſtanding all his commendable care.

Mr. Fielding, in the excellent piece here alluded to, has ſhewn himſelf a moſt worthy labourer in the vineyard of the public: and 'tis great pity that in a performance ſo maſterly, the one thing needful (as to the preſent point) ſhould be omitted. It is to be hoped, that he will ſoon oblige us with his plan, becauſe at this time the thoughts of a Gentleman of ſo much ability and experience, could not but be extremely uſeful.

In the mean time, what he has ſaid and quoted relating to the government of the people in criminal matters, proves the very thing required as to the poor: the ſame meaſures being applicable to the management of the poor as are neceſſary for the preſervation of the public peace.

How then was the public peace heretofore maintained in the high degree that makes our hiſtories ſhine in the repreſentation of it? Why, by dividing and ſubdividing the people into ſmall claſſes, each of which was anſwerable for its own inhabitants: nor is it poſſible for a great and populous country to be in any inſtance well governed in any other way.

[a] Mr. Fielding takes notice, that King Alfred, to guard againſt miſchiefs by robbers, &c. "limited the Shires or "Counties in a better manner than before; divided them "into Hundreds, and thoſe again into Tithings, Decen-"naries or ten families, over each of which was a tithing "man; and, That every ſubject in the Kingdom was re-"giſtred in ſome Tithing."

[a] Pag. 76.

"But

" [e] But this conſtitution would have been deficient, if " it had only provided for the incorporating the ſubjects, " unleſs it had confined them to the places where they were " incorporated. Wherefore by the laws of Alfred, De- " cenners could not depart from their dwelling without " conſent of their fellow pledges, nor leave the County " without licenſe of the Sheriff. Before this order was " eſtabliſhed (ſays Rapin) the meaner ſort of people might " ſhift their quarters, their obſcurity preventing their being " taken notice of. But it was impoſſible for them to " change their habitations, after they were obliged to bring " a teſtimonial from their tithing, to enable them to ſettle " and be regiſtered in another."

[f] Ingulphus ſays, that " ſuch was this excellent conſti- " tution, that in Alfred's time a traveller might have " openly left a ſum of money ſafely in the fields and high- " ways, and have found it ſafe and untouched a month " afterwards." Nay William of Malmſbury [g] tells us, that " the King ordered Bracelets of gold to be hung up " in the croſs ways, as a proof of the honeſty of his people, " none ever offering to meddle with them.

" [h] While this ancient conſtitution remained entire, " ſuch peace (ſays Lord Coke) was preſerved within the " realm, as that no injuries, robberies, riots, tumults, or " other offences, were committed; ſo as that a man with " a white wand might ſafely have ridden, before the Con- " queſt, with much money about him, without any wea- " pon, thro' England."

Does not all this point out to us what we ſhould do? Does it not prove the excellence of Q. Elizabeth's law, which is a ſtep towards the old method which wrought ſuch miracles? And can we proceed more wiſely than in following that track, till it leads us as near as poſſible to thoſe heights of good government?

We have been ſo unhappy in more modern times, that neither Britain nor any part of Europe (except Switzerland and Holland) have been able to ſupply us with freſh inſtances of what good effects the like good conduct will produce: but tho' 'tis pity we are forced to go ſo far for them, Examples are not wanting to prove the point.

[e] Pag. 79. [f] Edit. Oxon. p. 28. [g] Edit. Francof. p. 44. [h] p. 30.

China

China and Japan are the moſt populous countries in the known world. Their governments (in the inſtances now under conſideration) are very like thoſe of our Saxon anceſtors, and attended with the ſame good conſequences.

In China, every town is divided into four parts, and thoſe ſubdivided into ſmaller diſtricts, each containing ten houſes, over which an Officer preſides, who gives his account of their behaviour to a ſort of Headborough who is ſet over a hundred, and he makes his returns to the Mandarins. If a robbery is committed in the night, the neighbourhood muſt contribute to the loſs; and in every family, the father is reſponſible for his children and ſervants [i].

If it be aſked, what is all this to the poor? the anſwer is, that the ſame methods muſt be uſed, for the right employment and due maintenance, as for the good government of them, be thoſe methods what they will.

It may be alſo ſaid, that this is only viſionary, and cannot be now put in practice here. But why not? The new ſchemes are rather viſionary, and ſeem contrary both to reaſon and experience. Q. Elizabeth's parochial law approaches nearly towards K. Alfred's; and 'tis our own fault that it does not go ſtill nearer, and that without innovation or expence.

But how is this to be done? The legiſlature will, without doubt, find out the proper way, when once convinc'd that the foundation is right. However, to avoid the ſame omiſſion as has been blamed in Mr. Fielding, ſomething ſhall here be offered for that purpoſe, tho' with the utmoſt deference, and not with intention, to preſcribe any one particular way, but only to ſhew, that means may be found to anſwer the end propoſed, without any novelties in our laws or general ſyſtem of government.

Before this is attempted, it will be neceſſary to make ſome obſervations on many other faults found with our preſent ſtatutes; and to ſhew, that the chief of thoſe faults may be better amended under the preſent laws than under a County ſcheme.

[i] P. Le Compte.

The matter about *Certificates* is mightily blamed, repreſenting the hardſhip upon poor people, that they are not ſuffered to go into another place where they may earn their bread better than in that to which they belong. It muſt be acknowledged, that now and then particular hardſhips of this ſort may and will happen. And where is the law that ſometimes does not introduce particular grievances? But this is certainly good policy upon the whole. It is a means to prevent the poor from *wandering*: it prevents the many INCONVENIENCES ariſing from the gaining a legal inhabitancy by ſecret and concealed reſidence: it promotes a good behaviour in the poor towards their own pariſh: and is ſeldom denied now to any induſtrious perſon who applies for it upon good reaſons.

The law-ſuits about *Appeals* are alſo much cried out upon, as being of exorbitant expence and trouble. If this be an evil, 'tis a neceſſary one; and ariſes from the natural complexion of our State, which does not incline to give particular magiſtrates a power of determining in too ſummary a way, but leaves the parties intereſted to the ſatisfaction of an open trial.

Thoſe who ſee theſe affairs, can tell, that they are now at the Seſſions ſufficiently ſummary, and not ſo vaſtly expenſive as they are repreſented to be. The laws relating to ſettlements are become ſo well fixed and ſo thoroughly known, that the lawyers begin to cry out for want of work, and wiſh for a new act, which always brings freſh trade. And indeed the coſts of appeals are ſo far from being great or oppreſſive, that 'tis to be queſtioned, whether any one pariſh in England had not rather the laws ſhould continue as they are, than be barred of the right of appeal againſt the order of any two juſtices whatſoever.

The ſole conſideration, that this is a voluntary matter, and not put upon any pariſh but when they pleaſe themſelves, is enough to alledge for the continuance of it. Indeed if the poor were to be unpariſhed, and thrown all at large, there would be no occaſion for it, except between Counties; and that would be Weſtminſter-Hall-work in the firſt inſtance, and a great deal of that dreadful work muſt happen, if the County-ſcheme ſhould take place.

That

That the poor are tolerably well maintained by the generality of pariſhes, but that they are hardly, in any, well employed, is another great and juſt objection againſt our preſent laws. But where does the objection go; againſt the laws themſelves, or againſt the ſhameful non-obſervance of them? There is no objection againſt the ſtatutes, but only this one, that they impower pariſhes to ſet up workhouſes, but do not compel them. Whether the Legiſlature ſhall think it expedient to add this compulſory injunction or not, muſt be left to their prudence.

Pariſhes are apt to conſult their own intereſt. Small ones cannot ſet up ſuch houſes to any good purpoſe. Large ones ſeem of late to be coming into it almoſt every where, of themſelves; and it may poſſibly be better to leave them at their liberty in this reſpect, at leaſt for ſome little time longer, now ſo many are erecting: becauſe one of them ſet up upon ſpirit and emulation, and their own ſeeing the good effects of workhouſes in others, will be better conducted and proſper more, than ten that are raiſed by compulſion. To *impower* Juſtices of peace and pariſh-officers to ſet up ſuch houſes, were *proper*, one would think quite ſufficient, unleſs all kind of public ſpirit was entirely baniſhed out of the nation.

The complaints about *Vagrants* and *Beggars* are ſufficiently loud, and but too true: and ſomething more muſt be done in aid of the preſent laws againſt them. In order to judge what is beſt to be done, let it be conſidered, where the evil is greateſt, and where theſe miſcreants chiefly harbour and reſort. Is it near ſo much in the city of London, as in Weſtminſter? Is it near ſo much in boroughs and towns, as about the country at large? Such of them as have ſettlements may be eaſily confined by the preſent laws, unleſs we continue in ſuch a degree of indolence as is enough to defeat or enervate all laws. Such of them as have none, and come from abroad, or from Scotland or Ireland, may be confined in County-houſes of correction, or tranſported, or dealt with in any other proper way: the general plan for the poor being very little affected by them; they being indeed more properly the objects of the criminal laws.

If the ſcheme ſhould go forward for providing for the poor of a whole County in one place, it is not eaſy for the wit of man to foreſee, much leſs to prevent, its falling into one of the moſt *pernicious jobs* that ever infeſted this nation. Moſt certainly nothing of this bad ſort was ever in the view of Judge Hale, Sir Joſiah Child, or any of the Gentlemen now propoſing the County-plan. It was, the not taking into their conſideration the vile uſes that may be made of their good deſign, which occaſion'd them to eſpouſe it.

Let men of underſtanding reflect in their own minds, how 'tis poſſible to avoid the *dirty practices* of low and deſigning people, where SUCH SUMS muſt be laid out as are neceſſary to *build* a workhouſe, a houſe of correction, and an hoſpital, in every County? There muſt be all three, or the new ſcheme cannot go on; and they muſt be as large as a *town*, or they cannot receive the objects.

When this *diſorderly unhappy wretched* crew are all got together, how are they to be governed? How will the neighbourhood for many miles round avoid being *pillaged?* What a ſhocking *nuſance* will it be to thoſe who are ſo unfortunate as to have their houſes or ſeats near them? Will the Gentlemen of the country go voluntarily from their own homes to take care of them? Is it conceivable to expect it? They muſt be govern'd then (as was ſaid before) by a *little army of officers*, and muſt have their proviſions brought in by perſons who will find their account in it.

Place the nomination of theſe Officers and Proveditors in whom you pleaſe; can *Party* be excluded from nominations? can *Jobs* be prevented in the execution? can a moſt abominable *Nuſance*, and a moſt enormous *Expence* be any way avoided?

If it be imagined, that all this is ſaid in order to cry down the new-propoſed county-method merely at the ſame time to raiſe and inforce the old one in the manner about to be hinted at, it is a great miſtake. What is mention'd here, is to ſet before the public eye the ſtriking *inconveniences* that may attend an untried meaſure, and to recommend it to abler perſons to inforce the *old method*, if upon cool reflexion it be found a rational one. Whether this ſupport and inforcement be done in the way

now to be ſketched out, or in any other way, is quite indifferent, ſo that the great and good end be but duly anſwered.

As ſo much has been objected to the new-propoſed ſcheme, and ſo much ſaid in defence of our preſent ſtatutes, and ſuch acknowledgment made at the ſame time of the defects in the execution of them, it may now be expected that ſome meaſures ſhould be propoſed towards the removing thoſe defects.

In the firſt place, therefore, it ſeems proper to give attention to the two capital Cities, and then to the Counties.

The city of London, properly ſo call'd, is generally ſaid to be well governed already, both with regard to the poor, as well as in other reſpects. But if there be any defects there, they have a power of correcting many things themſelves: They have a large and well-ordered magiſtracy, and a good number of ſubordinate officers; ſo that they will probably ſet themſelves right, or if they ſhould in any thing want the further aid of Parliament, upon their application it will not be refuſed.

The vaſt out-pariſhes of London, and the great pariſhes in Weſtminſter, require the moſt immediate relief. And for theſe the methods chalked out by the very old laws, which are in part reſtored by thoſe now in uſe, ſeem to be the moſt natural, and moſt likely to prove effectual for the purpoſe deſired.

For example; Every one of theſe pariſhes ought to be divided by the Juſtices in ſeſſions into as many hundreds, and theſe ſubdivided into as many ſmaller diſtricts, as they from time to time ſhall ſee proper.

Over every one of theſe diſtricts a Tithing-man (to be at the ſame time ſworn a Conſtable) ſhould be appointed; who ſhould conſtantly viſit the houſes under his care, ſhould ſet down the names of all the inhabitants and lodgers, with their trades and ways of life, and whether their behaviour be orderly, and their children decently provided for, and ſet to work.

This return ſhould be made weekly to Headboroughs or chief Conſtables of the hundreds, and they ſhould carry them, with their own returns of the behaviour of the Tithingmen or petty Conſtables every month, to a ſpe-

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cial Seſſions of the Juſtices of the peace to be holden fo that purpoſe.

There ought to be an Overſeer of the poor for every Hundred, who ſhould at the ſame ſeſſions bring in his monthly account of the proviſion for the poor, and of the ſtate of ſuch poor People.

There ſhould be, in theſe great pariſhes, one or more workhouſes for the poor, with ſtock to employ them in uſeful labour, where the Juſtices of peace and the Overſeers may ſend ſuch as want work, or are idle, and likewiſe ſuch children as are not decently and properly provided for by their parents.

If the houſes of Correction for theſe great pariſhes are not already ſufficient for the purpoſe, ſome few more may be added; but all the houſes of Correction ſhould be made workhouſes, and not merely priſons: And an account of all the perſons confined in thoſe houſes, as to what they are employed in, and how they behave, ſhould be given by the maſters of them, at the ſame ſpecial ſeſſions, every month.

Theſe houſes ſhould be alſo viſited by ſome chief Conſtable every week, and by ſome one of the Juſtices at leaſt once a month, and a report made at the ſeſſions.

As nothing of all this can be done effectually, unleſs the Juſtices will attend, an order ſhould be made at the Eaſter-ſeſſions in every year, that ſuch and ſuch ſpecial ſeſſions ſhall be holden every month at ſuch places, and before ſuch Juſtices by name, any three of whom ſhall be ſufficient to make a Court.

That as the Juſtices at the general Quarter Seſſions have now only four ſhillings a-day for their expence, the Juſtices of theſe ſpecial ſeſſions ſhould be allowed half a guinea a-day, to be paid by the County-treaſurer; and ſuch of them as do not attend ſhall pay half a guinea to the County-treaſurer (unleſs hinder'd by ſickneſs, of which oath ſhall be made before a Juſtice of peace:) theſe forfeitures to be levied by diſtreſs by the under-ſheriff of the County, and paid to the Treaſurer.

Regard will be had by the Juſtices at the general Quar-

ter Seſſions, not to appoint too many Juſtices for the reſpective diviſions and ſpecial ſeſſions, ſo as to put the County to needleſs charge, nor ſo few as to run the hazard of having the public buſineſs neglected: About five might do for each ſpecial ſeſſions, and they ought to be men of the firſt rank and fortune, that the neighbourhood of the places will produce.

Reaſonable ſalaries for the Headboroughs, or chief Conſtables, and for the Tithingmen, or petty Conſtables, ſhould be paid by the pariſhes; as five ſhillings a-day for one day in a month, when the Headborough attends the ſpecial ſeſſions, and brings in his returns; and half a crown a-day for one day in a week, for the Tithingmen to go round, and make their returns to the Headborough. And if the poor who are able to work are all kept to it, as by this means they certainly may, the pariſhes will ſave much more than theſe ſalaries come to. The preſent beadles may be made Headboroughs or Tithingmen according to their capacity.

Over the door of every Tithingman's houſe a board ſhould be put, as over Surgeons doors, with this inſcription *J. B. tithingman*; and then every paſſenger who ſees a ſtrolling vagabond, a deſerted child, or any ſuch object, may go to the houſe, and demand of the Officer, that ſuch perſon be immediately carried to the workhouſe; in default of which, complaint may be made to the Headborough, or to the Juſtices at ſpecial Seſſions.

If the laws be now defective in giving ſufficient power to the Overſeers, or Juſtices, to ſend idle perſons, or the children of the idle, to the pariſh or other workhouſes, a clauſe may be eaſily obtained for that purpoſe: as alſo for ſending vagrants to any public workhouſe, or tranſporting them. For the principle laid down in the late propoſals is a very good one with regard to vagabonds, though not with regard to the parochial poor.

If this method be thought right for Weſtminſter and the ſuburbs of London, the ſame may be purſued for the Counties at large; viz. the Juſtices of peace, at every General Quarter Seſſions at Eaſter, may either continue the preſent diviſions of the County, or make more, if they find it convenient.

A monthly

A monthly ſpecial Seſſions may be appointed to be held in each diviſion by five Juſtices by name, (not excluding any others) three of whom may make a Court, and theſe five to be paid half a guinea a-day each for their charges by the County-treaſurer: Such of the Five as do not attend forfeiting half a guinea each, to be levied by diſtreſs by the under-ſheriff by warrant from the chairman of the general Seſſions, and paid to the Treaſurer [k].

That the chief Conſtable of each hundred ſhould make his monthly return at every ſpecial ſeſſions, and the petty Conſtables, or tithingmen, ſhould make their returns of the ſtate and behaviour of every pariſh, or tithing, to the chief Conſtable, or headborough of the hundred, (once a month in the Country, viz. the day before the ſpecial ſeſſions) ſetting forth the names of the inhabitants and lodgers; the number of public houſes, and the behaviour of the alehouſekeepers; and whether gaming of any ſort, or other diſorders, are practiſed in thoſe houſes (a more explicit power being given to the Juſtices than they have at preſent to ſuppreſs them.) The number of poor in each pariſh ſhould alſo be expreſſed, and an account how they are relieved, and how employed, and what workhouſes are already in each diviſion, and what more are wanted: and whether there are any ſpirituous liquors ſold among them without a licence.

The pay to each Chief Conſtable on the monthly returns five ſhillings a-day, and to each petty Conſtable or tithing man two and ſixpence weekly, for their viſiting every week, and making the returns every month.

A power ſhould be given to the ſpecial ſeſſions to puniſh theſe Headboroughs, or Tithingmen, for negligence or other miſbehaviour in their office, by mulcting them of their pay, or even impriſonment till the general Quarter Seſſions, in caſes that deſerve it. And by this means information would neceſſarily be made of all kind of diſorders,

[k] For the greater eaſe of the Juſtices, all the buſineſs that is now done at Special Seſſions may by a proper diſtribution of it, be done at theſe monthly Seſſions: and the Country will find a very great convenience in having ſpecial Seſſions regularly held for all their affairs.

which now cannot be had, the name of an officious informer being ſo much in diſrepute.

The Overſeers of the poor, and the Maſters of workhouſes and houſes of correction, are alſo to attend at theſe ſpecial Seſſions with their accounts, whenever ſummoned by the Juſtices; who ſhould have power to puniſh frauds or neglects of duty, an appeal to their judgment in theſe caſes being reſerved to the Quarter Seſſions, where it ſhould be final.

The principal houſe of Correction in every County-town, ſhould be made likewiſe a workhouſe, under the immediate inſpection of the five Juſtices of that diviſion, who ſhould conſtantly viſit the place at their monthly Seſſions, and ſee that ſome work be carried on there by the vagrants and other idle perſons thither committed.

In large Counties, where there are many houſes of Correction, all the priſoners who are committed for longer time than a week, ſhould be ſent to the principal County-houſe of Correction, where it will be eaſier to employ them with good effect: whereas in the ſmaller houſes of Correction, tho' there is occaſionally a neceſſity for them, yet it is not ſo eaſy to find proper work for vagabonds and criminals.

All pariſh-workhouſes ſhould be inſpected in their turns by the five Juſtices, in ſuch a rotation as they ſhall appoint among themſelves. And if any children of poor perſons are neglected, or ill provided for, by their parents, the Juſtices ſhould have power to ſend them to any neighbouring workhouſe (if they have none in their own pariſh) at the charge of the pariſh to which ſuch children belong, and to put them out to prentice or to ſervice at the charge of the ſame pariſh.

By theſe regulations, or ſomething of this ſort, which the wiſdom of the legiſlature ſhall dictate, the lower ſort of people, and the indigent and idle poor, may be well govern'd and well maintained.

Here will be no Innovation upon our conſtitution, but a nearer approach to the ſpirit and meaning of it, and almoſt all in the old forms. The expences will not be great in the execution of this plan; but, on the contrary, the general ſavings to the public will be immenſe, if by

this means the poor can be well employ'd, and the idle and profligate reſtrained.

The intereſt of the Juſtices in the General Quarter Seſſions will prevent any unneceſſary expences to the County, as to the number of diviſions: and the intereſt of the Juſtices in each of the diviſions near his own eſtate and habitation, will prevent any unneceſſary ſchemes for raiſing more workhouſes than can be well employed.

County-hoſpitals would be extremely proper, and a moſt humane and charitable proviſion; but they ought to be conſider'd quite by themſelves, diſtinct and ſeparate from all the foregoing matters, and to be conſtituted upon voluntary charity only.

Mr. Hay's Bill for this purpoſe ſeems to be moſt excellently well contrived; and as, without doubt, there were ſome reaſons why the houſe of Lords did not paſs it, their objections ſhould be inquired into, and a new bill framed, ſo that the ſick and wounded, the aged and infirm, might have ſuch a comfortable relief as the general good-nature of this kingdom ſeems always diſpoſed to afford them.

The hints above given are not offered as a quite regular plan, nor drawn up in the requiſite form upon which an act of Parliament ſhould be framed. It would have been too great a preſumption to propoſe them in ſuch a manner, till 'tis known whether the ſenſe of the legiſlature ſhall incline to the old ſyſtem of Parochial and Decennary government of the poor, or to the new ſcheme of doing it by Counties.

Perhaps it may not be thought right to take notice here of what ſome writers have ſaid about the city of Briſtol; about wool, the ſtaple of our employment for the poor; and about the perverting their morals, and making them more diſſolute by our preſent manner of Electioneering.

'Tis true, that the caſe of Briſtol cannot be well ſpoken to, but by thoſe who know the place and the facts; but ſuppoſing that their act of Parliament has perfectly well anſwered its end, it will not from thence follow, that a County-diviſion is better than a parochial one for the kingdom in general.

Briſtol is a maritime city, full of trade and commerce of all kinds, and full of merchants and conſiderable men, who are generally more ready to give a little of their time to public affairs, than thoſe who have nothing at all to do. Where there are a number of ſuch perſons as theſe, they may very well conduct ſuch a large matter among themſelves: eſpecially as they all have ſuch ready opportunities of employing the poor. But it is not ſo in other places, which imprudently obtained like acts of Parliament, when the circumſtances of thoſe places were widely different.

One of them in Suffolk [l], has moſt grievouſly hurt the town, and been attended with all the inconveniences, expences, jobs, and law-ſuits, that might reaſonably be expected from ſo improper a ſcheme; tho' the act itſelf was formed upon the plan of that of Briſtol.

Another of them in Eſſex [m], formed upon the ſame plan, has had the like bad conſequences; the poor were ill provided for, tho' the money raiſed for them vaſtly exceeded what has been found ſufficient ſince the act has expired. And while it ſubſiſted, it was made uſe of, many times, for party views and private purpoſes, and much diſorder and confuſion aroſe from what was at firſt well intended.

To take care that our wool be not exported immediately from the ſheep's back, is certainly one of the beſt means to find employment for the poor: and it is as certain, that ſo bulky a commodity might by rational laws be eaſily kept at home. But when mean local jealouſies enter into the frame of laws, and make them unreaſonable in their very conſtitution, no penalties or ſanctions, tho' they extend to life itſelf, can make ſuch edicts effectual. All the ſevere acts of Parliament have not hitherto hindered Ireland from ſending their wool to France. What is the reaſon? why, becauſe of that other unnatural law, which prohibits them from ſending out the ſame wool when manufactured. How came this laſt law to be made? why, becauſe particular cities or towns in England thought the Iriſh would rival them in their trade. But how does this ſtand with the general reaſon of the thing, or with true

l Sudbury. m Colcheſter.

national

national Policy? Suppoſe Ireland was to be treated merely as a conquered province, and not as a part of the Britiſh dominions, which in itſelf would be a moſt abſurd meaſure, yet ſuppoſing it for the preſent; would it be right for a Conqueror to ſay to a ſettled and quiet people, now become his ſubjects, "You ſhall not work up the products "of the earth yourſelves, and you ſhall not ſell them to "your neighbours?" Human nature can't bear ſuch an injunction: they'll venture the Gallows or any other penalty, rather than burn their wool, or throw it into the ſea, when they can have money for it in a few hours ſail: and eſpecially when the look-out is ſharper upon them to prevent their ſending out goods, than their ſending out wool.

One would be apt to think, that a judicial infatuation muſt attend a people who ſuffer ſuch tyranny and folly to prevail together. The perjuries that pollute the whole commerce of Britain, have ſurely drawn down the anger of heaven to blind us ſo much, that we can't ſee the moſt obvious methods for ſupporting our poor, and preſerving our trade in that part of it that muſt always be laſting, if 'tis not our own fault, becauſe the wool of England and Ireland is a material ſo very much wanted in all other countries.

Is there a mathematical demonſtration more plain than this, That a pack of wool wrought up in Ireland can hurt the Engliſh trader no more, than the ſame pack of wool wrought up in France, ſuppoſing that the French by means of it did not work up much of their own with it (which could not otherwiſe be uſed) as they now actually do?

Ay, but ſays a particular City, if Ireland might export their own goods, they would underſell us in ſuch a ſpecies at Liſbon.

When the above demonſtrable truth is urged even to ſome great men, the anſwer they give is, "that if Ireland "was ſuffered to ſend out their own woollen manufactures, "all the woollen trade, nay, all other trade, the general "wealth and power, muſt all remove to Dublin." Such ſtrange reaſoning as this from perſons of known abilities and

capacity,

capacity, only proves, that they are under the influences of the particular City or Borough, but don't care to own it.

There's demand enough abroad for all the woollen goods that Britain and Ireland can furniſh: but we throw away our wool to France, neglect our own poor, and advance the ſtrength of our moſt formidable adverſary, only to indulge the jealouſy and caprice of a few particular towns.

Gentlemen, whoſe eſtates are in ſheep-walks, would find their account in it, if Ireland was ſuffered to work up their own wool: becauſe, when France gets a great deal of Iriſh wool, our own trade fails, and the price of wool here is low; but when their trade fails, and the wool is wrought up at home, the price of it always riſes; and if no wool at all was to go abroad from Britain or Ireland, the price of it would ſtill riſe higher.

But if Ireland might work up its own wool, would not the Linen-trade there be neglected? All that have conſidered trade in an extenſive light have proved the contrary.

The puſhing one branch of trade does not leſſen others, but improves them; and there are hands enough in Ireland to manufacture all the wool they grow, and all the flax they can either raiſe or procure.

Has the ſilk-trade in Spital-Fields leſſened the woollen-trade of London? Not at all; they have both increaſed, and a part of the manufacture of Linen along with them: and ſo it would be, if every aſſortment of goods that can be named was ſtill added to them. It would only increaſe the number of people, but not leſſen any one of the trades: and when this is got to the higheſt pitch that the place will bear, Colonies of the reſpective branches (if that word may be uſed) will neceſſarily form themſelves in other parts of the kingdom.

The perverſion of our poor by our preſent manner of *Electioneering* is juſtly complained of by a very judicious and ingenious writer, to whom the world is much obliged for his *Eſſay on trade*[n]. He there calls it "a ſtab to in-"duſtry, and what gives a taſte for idleneſs, and brings "on a habit of drunkenneſs and extravagance, removing

[n] Printed for T. Trye, 1750.

"at

" at the ſame time all proper ſubordination and reſtraint, " contrary to the juſt order of ſociety."

This matter, as well as the laſt about wool, being of a higher nature than to come properly under conſideration when we are ſpeaking of laws immediately relating to the poor; it is hoped, that the reader will regard what is here ſaid in reſpect to both, to be rather with a view that ſuch great objections ſhould not ſeem neglected, than with any intent to combine what relates to theſe points with the practicable things before offered in ſupport of Q. Elizabeth's laws.

Under this caution, there may be no harm in conſidering (by way of ſpeculation) how this confeſſedly *rotten part of our conſtitution* might be rectified. To reſort to the firſt principles of it ſeems the ſafeſt method. Every body knows, that, ever ſince the Revolution, (if not always before) this State has conſiſted of an hereditary King eſtabliſhed by Parliament; a permanent and hereditary houſe of Peers; and a houſe of Commons, repreſenting the body of the people, elected by almoſt all ſuch as have property in the nation.

By the natural courſe of things, there will be a ſhifting of property, more eſpecially in a trading country, and more ſtill in a kingdom where the land-property (the moſt conſiderable with reſpect to government) has had ſuch very great changes as were occaſioned by the Statute of Henry the Seventh, which impowered every one to buy and ſell; and by the Reformation in Henry the Eighth's time, which brought the Church-lands into the hands of the People, great part of the lands of the Crown being alſo ſince come into the ſame hands.

While the chief of the landed eſtates were in the poſſeſſion of the Peers, the Church, and the Crown, the moſt conſiderable of the people were the traders in maritime and other towns; and the inhabitants of the cities and royal boroughs; and therefore theſe were the places properly pitched upon from whence to ſend repreſentatives to Parliament; the Freeholders of each County ſending two Knights from every Shire to repreſent them: But theſe were to be Freeholders of ſome conſiderable quantity of land, viz. of forty ſhillings a-year, which in Henry the Sixth's

time,

time, when that limitation was fixed, was vaſtly greater than the ſame ſum now [o].

By this change of property, (the places and perſons electing not being changed along with it) the very meaning and deſign of the conſtitution is in a great meaſure perverted. For the Commons, who have now the chief part of the lands in every County, have ſtill no more than their two Knights, while the ſame County ſwarms with Boroughs, who have little or no property at all: the Freeholders of the city of London itſelf having no repreſentative, nor a voice any where in right of their Freeholds.

Oliver Cromwell ſaw this defect in his time; and, as he had many patriot-ſchemes before he became a monarch, (for a monarch he truly was, tho' not a King) he, in the plenitude of power, was for ſtriking at the root at once, and took away the elections from the ſmall boroughs, adding more to the Counties, and great cities. And Lord Clarendon's candor induced him to ſay, that this meaſure deſerved the conſideration of better times.

Such a violent alteration as this, does not well ſuit any times but when abſolute neceſſity makes power run high. But it has been thought, that the main end might be anſwered by enacting, "that every Freeholder of lands to "the value of forty or fifty pounds a year, or upwards, "might have a right of voting along with the burghers in "every borough in the County where his lands lie, not "gaining thereby any other franchiſe or right whatſoever "in that borough."

This it is imagined would throw the right of Election into the proper hands, without disfranchiſing any borough, or any particular man whatſoever. It might have ſome of the effect of an Agrarian law, occaſioning a wide diſperſion of land-property, and a tenacious and frugal keeping of ſuch a portion of it as would intitle the owner to ſo diſtinguiſhing a privilege.

[o] Fleetwood's Chronicon pretioſum.

The

The ſmall boroughs would probably not diſlike it; becauſe it would occaſion a great deal of company coming thither, and a great deal of money to be neceſſarily ſpent in the place.

The Cities and great boroughs would have no reaſon to object againſt it: becauſe the law ſhould not be extended to them, but they to remain as they are, and only ſuch as have not two hundred voters to be affected by it.

The reader will excuſe its being repeated here, that theſe things relating to the Wool and to Elections, are by no means proper to be blended with the laws about the poor, but are mentioned problematically and only to anſwer objections.

The ſame excuſe is aſked, for adding a few words about Juſtices of peace, before the concluding this Eſſay, which is already grown by much too tedious.

Unleſs a ſet of new Officers be appointed, unknown to our laws and conſtitution, the maintenance of the public peace, and the ſuper-intendency of the poor, muſt naturally fall to the ſhare of the old Magiſtrates, the Juſtices or conſervators of the Peace.

The Britiſh People would not like to ſee Intendants, Baſſas, or Mandarins; they would not like to pay their ſalaries, nor to feel their power. It ſeems, therefore, beſt to go on in our beaten path; and, if the courſe of time has thrown us into any deviations, we ſhould endeavour to rectify them.

Magiſtracy there muſt be; and to have it with any effect, it muſt be made reſpectable. There muſt be ſomething of honor or profit attending it, in order to engage proper perſons to act: or at leaſt there ought not to be too much loſs and expence, nor any circumſtances of diſgrace going with it. If all this be true, then let it be conſidered, how far the Office of a Juſtice of peace at preſent is or is not circumſtanced accordingly.

In Henry the Sixth's time it was intended, that their expences at ſeſſions ſhould be paid; but that proviſion now falls greatly ſhort. The propoſal hinted at above is deſigned

ſigned to prevent their being hurt by the ſpecial ſeſſions: but if Gentlemen have ſtill the ſpirit to carry on one of the moſt burdenſome offices in the kingdom, at their own expence, and without any reward, which certainly ought to gain them reſpect, they ought to be ſecure of having good company, or at leaſt not to be deprived of the beſt, that each neighbourhood affords.

What has been the reaſon for it, let others enquire; but ſo it is, that of late years a great number, and ſtill not a few gentlemen of five hundred pounds a-year eſtate and upwards, are left out of the Commiſſions of the peace. The names and circumſtances of theſe Gentlemen may be artfully concealed from the great perſons who ſhould inſert them, or the characters of ſome may be miſrepreſented.

To remedy this, would there be any harm, if it ſhould be enacted, "that every Gentleman of five hundred a-"year or upwards, might at any aſſizes, when the Com-"miſſion is read over, require his name to be added, ex-"hibiting at the ſame time his qualification, and acting "at his peril if it proves a falſe one?"

As a ſpur to the indolent, and to ſecure the better ſort that they may meet proper company, would it be at all wrong, on the other hand, to enact, that every Gentleman of five hundred a-year eſtate and upwards, except the Judges and great officers of State, ſhall act in the commiſſion of the peace, or elſe pay twenty pounds a-year to the treaſurer of the County, to help defray the expences of thoſe who do act? This will not be looked upon as a ſevere fine, when it is conſidered, that it coſts thoſe more, who voluntarily engage in the public ſervice.

The credit of the Commiſſion will riſe, in proportion to the number of perſons of Rank and Fortune who appear in it; and this of very late years has been rather advancing. Mean, low, trading Juſtices are not much heard of in the Country; and never will be heard of, if Gentlemen will act; but inducements are ſaid to be wanting to engage ſtill more to appear, and to counter-act the indolence which naturally follows eaſy fortunes.

To

To be able to bluſter (and ſometimes more than bluſter) at a poacher; to keep their own pariſh under their own government, and to prevent other perſons from exerciſing authority there, are, in the opinion of ſome, ſufficient motives: and indeed theſe things, of the honorary kind, mixed with a little controlable power, ſhould be the only motives for engaging in a magiſtracy of this ſort. To make it lucrative, would be abſolutely ſpoiling it: all reſpect would forſake it, and every conceivable inconveniency would be the conſequence.

But as the Juſtices, in that part of Middleſex which contains the out-pariſhes of London, (where good magiſtrates are more wanted than in any other place) have none of the common motives which encourage Gentlemen in the Country; as they have more buſineſs, and of the moſt diſagreeable ſort; and as the diſreputation which trading Juſtices there have brought upon the Commiſſion, abſolutely prevents many worthy men from appearing; ſomething in particular ought to be done for that diſtrict, either by way of ſalaries to mere men of buſineſs, or elſe ſome diſtinguiſhing honors to thoſe who are above it.

There have been objections made to two of Q. Elizabeth's laws which have not yet been conſidered. The one is, that for preventing the building of Cottages without laying five acres of land to each; the other, that for prohibiting perſons to exerciſe trades who have not ſerved ſeven years apprenticeſhip.

As to the firſt, people have been at a loſs to know the reaſon upon which it is founded; as it tends plainly to diſcourage and drive away uſeful poor. This is certainly now the conſequence of that law, and therefore it ſeems quite right to have it repealed.

Agriculture is (thank heaven) in a different ſtate from what it was in Q. Elizabeth's time: Half the lands were then a foreſt, and many of the poorer ſort in them as wild and as uſeleſs as Indians: and when manufactures were in their infancy, ſhe wanted to drive theſe wild people into towns, where they might be employed in trade, and not live in huts like Highlanders: But farming is now become one of the beſt trades; and the reaſon for it ceaſing, the law ſhould ceaſe.

The

The ſecond law might alſo be of uſe in the beginnings of trade, but afterwards might prove monopolizing and miſchievous. It has always been deem'd, as it truly is, a very hard law, and therefore the legiſlature will probably repeal it, eſpecially as to the lower trades of Barbers, Butchers, &c. in which our foreign exports have no Concern.

Some of the Reſolutions of the Houſe of Commons, referr'd to in the foregoing Papers.

13 *Die Junii*, 1751.

Reſolved,

That the Proviſion for the Poor of England and Wales, is become a very great, and is at preſent an encreaſing Charge on the real and perſonal Eſtates of the Subjects.

That one great Cauſe of this Expence, is, that the vaſt Sums, raiſed for their uſe, are in general expended on their mere Maintenance only, and very little or no Care taken to provide for their Employment.

That another great Source of this Expence, is, the Removals of poor Perſons from one part of this Kingdom to another, as to the Place of their legal Settlements, and the Numbers of Controverſies ariſing thereon.

That another great Source of the Increaſe of Expence, is, that there is in general little or no Care taken to educate the Children of the Poor in Habits of Induſtry, ſo that, when they grow up, they are not able to provide a Maintenance for themſelves, and ſo live in Idleneſs, partly through Neceſſity, and conſequently propagate a new Race of chargeable Poor———

That many Pariſhes are too ſmall ſeparately to raiſe a Stock, ſufficient wherewith to employ the Poor to any Advantage.

That it would, in all Probability, be a great means of leſſening, to a conſiderable degree, the Charge of the Poor, and of greatly decreaſing their Number in a very few Years, if ſome Method ſhould be agreed on to maintain and employ the Poor, by one common Fund in every County, although no Pariſh ſhould be obliged to contribute more than they have uſually paid to the Maintenance of their own Poor, at a reaſonable Medium.

That after ſuch Method ſhould be agreed upon, the Repeal of the ſeveral Laws concerning the Settlements and Removals of, and Certificates for, the Poor, would be a Saving of very great Sums now expended on thoſe Occaſions.

N. B. The Sixth Reſolution of the Committee, being read a ſecond time, was, with ſeveral Amendments thereto, agreed to by the Houſe, and is as follows:

Reſolved, That it would, in all Probability, be a great means of leſſening, to a conſiderable Degree, the Charge of the Poor, and of greatly decreaſing their Number in a very few Years, if ſome Method ſhould be agreed on to maintain and employ the Poor, by a common Fund in every County.

F I N I S.